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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/048,132	06/12/2002	Wolfgang Heimberg	REN-12804	2842
7609	7590	05/31/2006		
RANKIN, HILL, PORTER & CLARK, LLP 925 EUCLID AVENUE, SUITE 700 CLEVELAND, OH 44115-1405				
			EXAMINER NAGPAUL, JYOTI	
			ART UNIT 1743	PAPER NUMBER

DATE MAILED: 05/31/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	10/048,132	HEIMBERG ET AL.	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	Jyoti Nagpaul	1743	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 17 April 2006.
- 2a) ☐ This action is FINAL. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 14, 16-26 and 28-35 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 14, 16-20, 28, 29, 32 and 33 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☒ Claim(s) 21-26, 30, 31, 34 and 35 is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Amendment filed on April 17, 2006 has been acknowledged. Claims 14, 16-26, 28-35 are pending.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

1. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

2. The factual inquiries set forth in *Graham v. John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 148 USPQ 459 (1966), that are applied for establishing a background for determining obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) are summarized as follows:

1. Determining the scope and contents of the prior art.
2. Ascertaining the differences between the prior art and the claims at issue.
3. Resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.
4. Considering objective evidence present in the application indicating obviousness or nonobviousness.

3. This application currently names joint inventors. In considering patentability of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the examiner presumes that the subject matter of the various claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein were made absent any evidence to the contrary. Applicant is advised of the obligation under 37 CFR 1.56 to point out the inventor and invention dates of each claim that was not commonly owned at the time a later invention was made in order for the examiner to consider the applicability of 35 U.S.C. 103(c) and potential 35 U.S.C. 102(e), (f) or (g) prior art under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

4. **Claims 14,16-20, 28-29 and 32-33** are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over EPO 0635710 (herein '710') in view of Feygin.

'710 teaches a sample dispenser (10) for the application of liquid samples with a sample volume on to a sample absorbing area (6) with a sample dispenser body (10) having at its end a recess (7) bounded by a continuous edge, such that, when the recess (7) is dipped into a sample reservoir (38), a droplet of liquid sample of predetermined size adheres to the recess (7) on the sample absorbing area (6) is completely dispensed, wherein the recess (7) has a shape selected from the group consisting of a hollow cone and a segmented hollow sphere. (See Col. 6, Lines 8-20) (See Figures 3A-5A) With respect to Claim 16-18, 29 and 33, the method of forming the device is not germane to the issue of patentability of the device itself. Therefore, the limitations "polished" and "drilling" as recited in Claims 16-18 ~~has~~ ^{have} not been given patentable weight. With respect to Claims 19-20, the recess (7) is a free end face of the sample dispenser body (10) in the form of an elongated body. (See Figures 3A-5A)

'710 fails to teach a sample volume of less than one microliter and wherein the recess has a depth of less than 50% of its width.

Feygen teaches a liquid dispenser such that the capillary channel is capable of retaining a liquid volume in the range of 0.5 to about 5 microliters. (See Col. 3, Lines 30-34)

With respect to a sample volume of less than one microliter, it would have been obvious to one of the ordinary skill in the art to modify the device of '710 such that a

sample volume of less than one microliter is absorbed on to the sample absorbing area in order to obtain an amount suitable for precise and accurate analysis.

With respect to the recess has a depth of less than 50% of its width, it would have been obvious to one of the ordinary skill in the art to modify the device of '710 such that the recess has a depth of less than 50% of its width in order to obtain desired amounts of liquid for analysis.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 21-26, 30-31 and 34-35 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Prior art fails to teach or fairly suggest wherein the sample dispenser body has as its tip a cylindrical section.

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 14,16-26 and 28-35 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.


Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Jyoti Nagpaul whose telephone number is 571-272-1273. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday thru Friday (8:00-4:30).

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Jill Warden can be reached on 571-272-1267. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

JN


Jill Warden
Supervisory Patent Examiner
Technology Center 1700